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Rappahannock Area Health District Will Expand COVID-19 Vaccination to “Phase 1b” Recipients

(Fredericksburg, Va.) -- Beginning, January 19, 2021, the Rappahannock Area Health District (RAHD) will begin conducting closed “point of dispensing” (POD) COVID-19 vaccination clinics specifically for “Phase 1b” priority groups. [Phase 1b](#) is the second group eligible to receive the vaccine, and includes police, fire and hazmat response personnel, those living and working in correctional facilities, homeless shelters and migrant labor camps, childcare/K-12 teachers and staff, food and agriculture workers, manufacturers, grocery store workers, public transit workers, and mail carriers (USPS and private). Phase 1b will also include the expanded definitions announced on January 14, including anyone age 65 or over, and people age 16-64 with an underlying medical condition.

Individuals will be required to bring a personal form of identification such as a driver’s license, and may also be asked to show proof of qualification, such as a work ID, in order to verify eligibility. Individuals in Phase 1a who have not yet received a vaccine will also be eligible to schedule appointments during Phase 1b clinics. COVID-19 vaccine is not available to the general public and these are not public events.

“We are pleased to provide a safe and effective vaccine to frontline essential workers and the members of our community most at risk for severe illness due to COVID-19,” said Acting RAHD Director Dr. Denise Bonds. “With the new guidance released on January 14, RAHD is working diligently to include individuals age 65 and up and those with underlying medical conditions in Phase 1b vaccination. This substantially increases the number of people who will be eligible for COVID-19 vaccination in our health district, and we ask for the community’s patience as we continue to work with our local hospital partners to provide vaccines to all groups included in this phase.”

Vaccination planning teams are reaching out to employers in Phase 1b. Employers of Phase 1b essential workers who wish who wish to receive the vaccine or have questions should complete the form available at bit.ly/RAHDTier1b and identify a point of contact for vaccine information. RAHD staff will then follow up with the identified point of contact to identify employees who wish to be vaccinated and provide instructions for scheduling appointments.

Individuals age 65 and older and individuals with underlying medical conditions can indicate their interest in receiving a vaccine through RAHD by completing the form available at https://redcap.link/rahd_65andup.

As availability of the vaccine increases, Virginia will move to additional phases. The complete definitions of all phases, data and other information, are on VDH’s Vaccine Response website at www.vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19-vaccine/. Citizens can take this [brief questionnaire](#) to find out which vaccination phase they fall under.

(More)

Virginians who do not fall into priority phases will be offered the COVID-19 vaccine when it is more widely available. Once the vaccine is rolled out to the general public, distribution will be similar to the flu vaccine. People will be able to get the vaccine from a local pharmacy, primary care physician, Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)/free clinic, local health department or other clinic that is participating as a COVID-19 Vaccination Program Provider. Providers interested in administering COVID-19 vaccine to patients or staff can begin this process by completing a COVID-19 Provider Intent Form, available at apps.vdh.virginia.gov/VERIP/Home.aspx .

“In the meantime, it is important to remain vigilant in COVID-19 prevention,” said Dr. Bonds. “While the vaccine provides hope on the horizon, it will still be months before the vaccine is widely available publicly. It’s important to remember we are still very much in the trenches of this pandemic and we must continue to adhere to COVID-19 prevention practices.”

Community members can continue to protect themselves by covering your mouth and nose with a mask, washing hands often and thoroughly, staying at least six feet away from others, avoiding gatherings with anyone who is not a household member, and getting a flu shot.

Updated COVID-19 vaccination plans will be shared at [RAHD’s website](#). You can learn more about the vaccine, its safety and answers to frequently asked questions at [VDH’s website](#) and [CDC’s website](#).

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